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ABSTRACT

A literacy needs assessment on an aboriginal island reserve in Canada was conducted to address courses to improve the literacy of adult aboriginal students. Fifty-one adults responded to the questionnaire relative to the need to initiate an adult education program. Questionnaire results indicated that secondary school upgrading courses in mathematics and English at the Grade 11 level would serve the needs of the student population. The preferred time was evening to accommodate the students who also worked. The educational goals of students were completing high school and community college. The reading tests indicated that only a small number of students were working above their reading grade level and the majority of students were reading capably to reach their chosen educational goals. The delivery of courses in summer school permitted some secondary school students to make up credits. (Appendixes to the four-page report are the questionnaire, nine graphs, mathematics class selected student journal entries, and statistics for two summer schools.) (YLB)

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ED 379 403

Literacy Needs Assessment for an Aboriginal Island Reserve

Jane Fraser

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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ABSTRACT

A Literacy Needs Assessment on an Aboriginal Island Reserve was conducted with the purpose of addressing courses to improve the literacy of adult Aboriginal students. Questionnaire results indicated that Secondary School upgrading courses in Mathematics and English at the Grade 11 level would serve the needs of the student population. The preferred time was evening, to accommodate the students who were also working. The educational goals of students were High School and Community College. The reading tests indicated that only a small number of students were working above their Reading Grade Level and the majority of students were reading capably to reach their chosen educational goals. The delivery of courses in Summer School permitted some Secondary School students to make up credits. Appendices include student journal entries and annual statistics for this Summer School and the following summer.

LITERACY NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR AN ABORIGINAL ISLAND RESERVE

Introduction

A literacy needs assessment was conducted and implementation of an adult education programme was given to address the needs.

Method

Fifty-one adults responded to the Literacy Needs Assessment Questionnaire to initate an adult education programme.**(Appendix 1)**. The questions were designed to produce a demographic profile which would then be addressed by appropriate courses for literacy improvement, at suitable times of day and seasons of the year.

Fifty-one adults participated in Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests for Vocabulary and Comprehension. The tests were conducted individually for 10 students, and collectively for 3 groups: the Mathematics class, the English Class and a potential Desktop Publishing Class, for future enrollment.

Note that the students who would be from the Technical Area of Learning were primarily employed on First Nation projects when the needs assessment was being conducted.

Literacy Needs Assessment Observations **(Appendix 2)**

Graph 1 Adult Students illustrates the Areas of Learning:

Upgrading
Business
Technical

Most students require upgrading courses, next business and last technical which is not included in this study because courses are offered in classroom technical instruction, followed by the employment projects underway at the time of this study.

Graph 2 Work Experience illustrates Employment:

Skilled Employment
Unskilled Employement
No Previous Employment

Most respondents were experienced in skilled employment, followed by unskilled employment and a small number with no previous employment.

Graph 3 Support Auspices illustrates Support Auspices:

Full Time Work
Disability, UIC, Other
General Welfare
Part-Time Work
Training Allowance
Family Benefits
Old Age Pension
Vocational Rehabilitation

Three support auspices are highest in number:
Full Time Work
Disability, UIC, Other
General Welfare

Very few respondents have Part-Time Work
Training Allowance
Family Benefits
Old Age Pension

No respondents are on Vocational Rehabilitation.

Graph 4 Educational Background compares last English Course completed with Last Grade completed:

Grades 1-3
Grades 4-6
Grades 7-10
Grade 11
Grade 12
Other

Last grade range completed by the most students was Grade 7-10, followed by less in Grade 12, Grade 11, and Other. A very samll number completed grade ranges 1-3 and 4-6.

Graph 5 Educational Goals illustrates Educational Goals:

High School
Community College
University

The greatest number of repondents want to complete High School, followed by Community College and the least number have University as an educational goal.

Graph 6 Location illustrates where courses are taught:

At First Nation
Elsewhere

The greatest number of respondents prefer courses at the First Nation. Very few want to take courses elsewhere.

Graph 6A Location illustrates choice of location for Co-Op education placement, if given:

At First Nation
Elsewhere

For Co-Op Placement, if a course is offered, the respondents prefer the First Nation Location, but are also prepared to go elsewhere.

Graph 6B Season indicated choice of season for courses:

Summer
Fall
Winter
Spring

Fall is the preferred season for courses. Equal choice is for summer and winter. Last choice is spring.

Graph 6B(i) Time indicated choice of time of day for courses:

Evenings
Saturdays

Respondents preferred Evenings to Saturdays as choice of time.

Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests Observations

Standardized tests were taken with ease by the students because of the professional manner in which the tests were administered. The students accepted the individual reports and positive suggestions for improvement.

Only a small number of students were working above their Reading Grade Level, and the majority of students were reading capably to reach their chosen educational goals.

Conclusion and Implementation

The Literacy Needs Assessment Questionnaire and Reading Tests reflect the need for literacy training at the Grade 11 level in Upgrading Academic Courses. Business courses are also needed.

Considering numbers of students who registered in Mathematics and English, and the time of year and staffing needs, it was decided to offer Summer School courses in Mathematics and English staffed by the teacher-researcher and a local School Board teacher.

The classes consisted of adult students who were returning to school and some Secondary School students making up credits. The students attended a 110 hour course for a full credit.

Included in **Appendix 3** are student journal entries which show personal growth for adults returning to school.

Research results agree with Fraser (1991) Factors Contributing to Employment and Enhancement in Quality of Life of Adult Education Students.

Also, integrate research results for Fraser (1993) Outcome Based Teaching Strategies and Evaluation for Computer Instruction in Keyboarding on an Aboriginal Island Reserve. **(Appendix 4)**

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BEAUSOLEIL FIRST NATION RESERVE

TO INITIATE AN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME
(Check the choice which applies to you)

1. What area of learning do you wish to persue?

___ 1. Upgrading
___ 2 Business
___ 3 Technical

2. What would be your responsibilities outside school?

___ 1. Employment outside school
___ 2. Home responsibilities
___ 3. School only

3. What is your work experience?

___ 1. No previous employment
___ 2. Unskilled employment
___ 3. Skilled employment

4. How will you be supported while attending school?

___ 1. Training allowance
___ 2. General Welfare Assistance
___ 3. Part-time work
___ 4. Full-time work
___ 5. Family Benefits Assistance
___ 6. Old Age Pension
___ 7. Vocational Rehabilitation
___ 8. Other

5. We are interested in your progress by June, 1993.
How do you wish to be contacted?

___ 1. Telephone
___ 2. Mail
___ 3. Personal interview
___ 4. You will notify the school

6. After your courses, do you intend to continue your education?

___ 1. University
___ 2. Community College
___ 3. Other

7. Do you wish to have a Co-Op Placement for work experience?

___ 1. Business
___ 2. Technical

8. Do you wish your Co-Op placement on the Reserve or elsewhere?

___ 1. Co-Op placement on the Reserve
___ 2. Co-Op placement elsewhere

9. Please indicate your last grade completed in school?

___ 1. Grades 1-3
___ 2. Grades 4-6
___ 3. Grades 7-10
___ 4. Grade 11
___ 5. Grade 12
___ 6. Other (please specify)_____

10. What Grade level was your last English course?

___ 1. Grades 1-3
___ 2. Grades 4-6
___ 3. Grades 7-10
___ 4. Grade 11
___ 5. Grade 12
___ 6. Other (please specify)_____

11. Have you ever enrolled in Distance Education?

___ 1. Yes
___ 2. No

12. Have you taken courses from the Independent Learning Centre?

___ 1. Yes
___ 2. No

13. When do you want to attend the courses?

___ 1. Evenings
___ 2. Saturdays

14. Are you interested in courses at different times on the year?

___ 1. Summer
___ 2. Fall
___ 3. Winter
___ 4. Spring

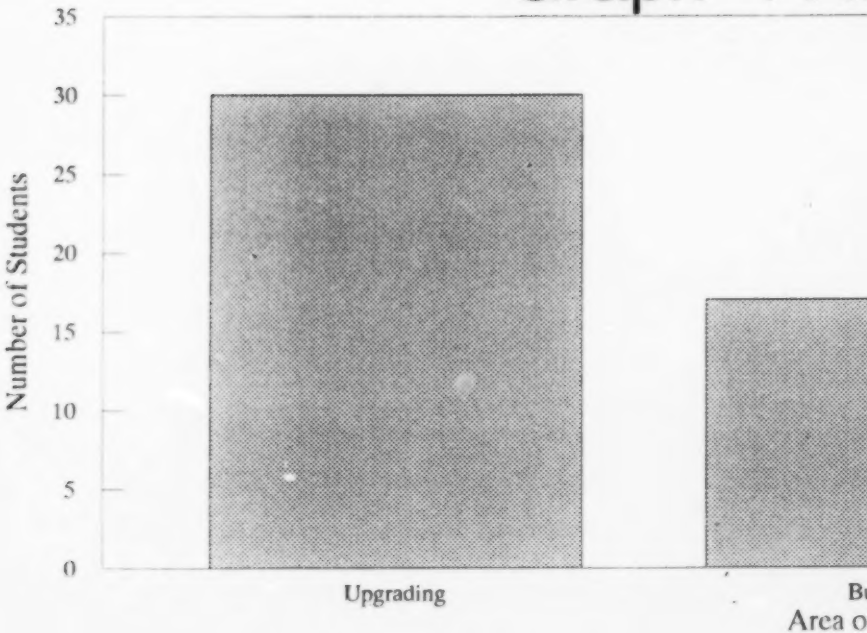
15. Do your children attend school?

___ 1. Secondary School
___ 2. Elementary School
___ 3. Daycare
___ 4. Other (please specify)_____

16. Where do you want to take your adult education courses?

___ 1. On the Beausoleil First Nation Reserve?
___ 2. Other (please specify)_____

Graph 1 Ac



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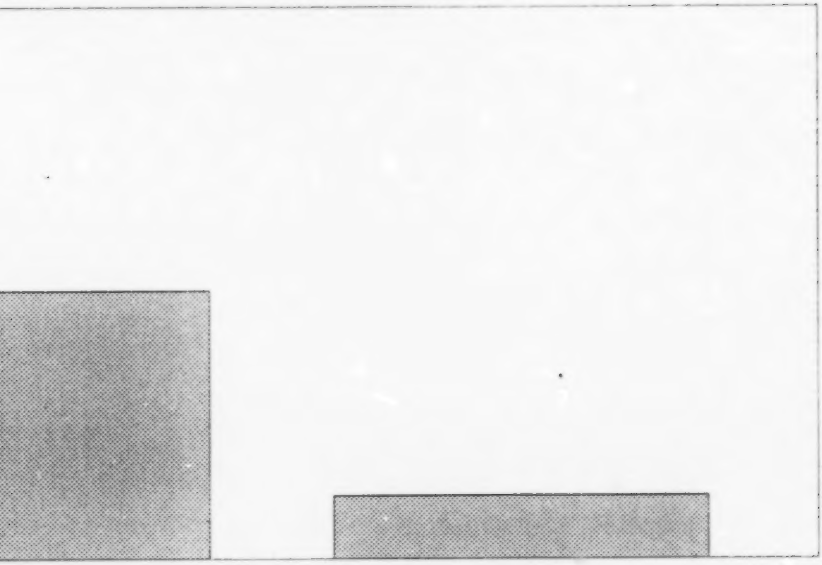

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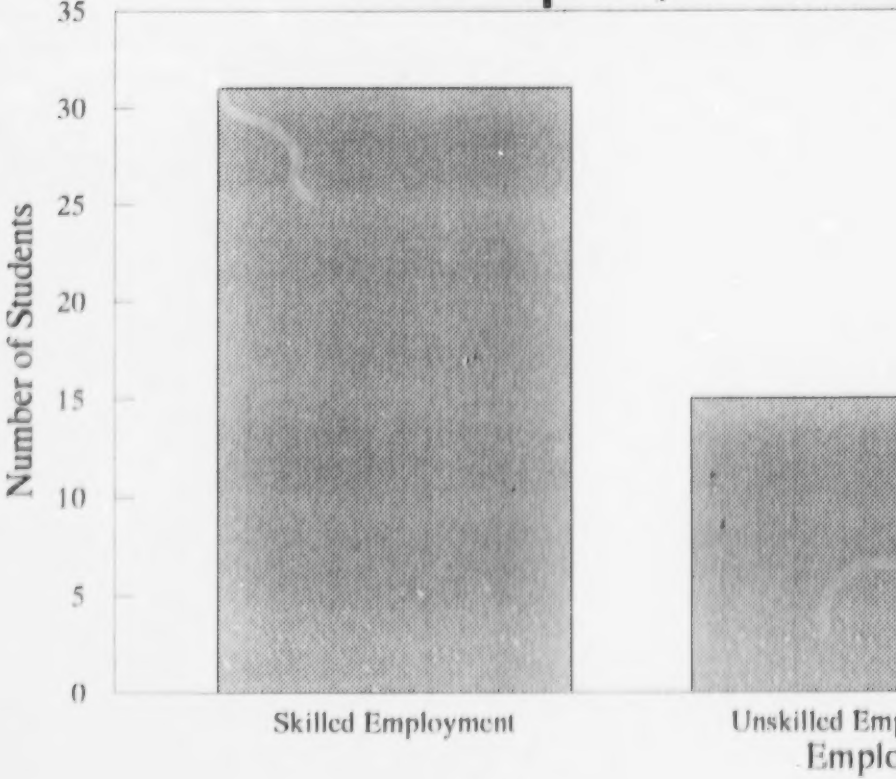
Technical

Graph 2 Wor


35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Number of Students
Skilled Employment
Unskilled Emp
Emplo

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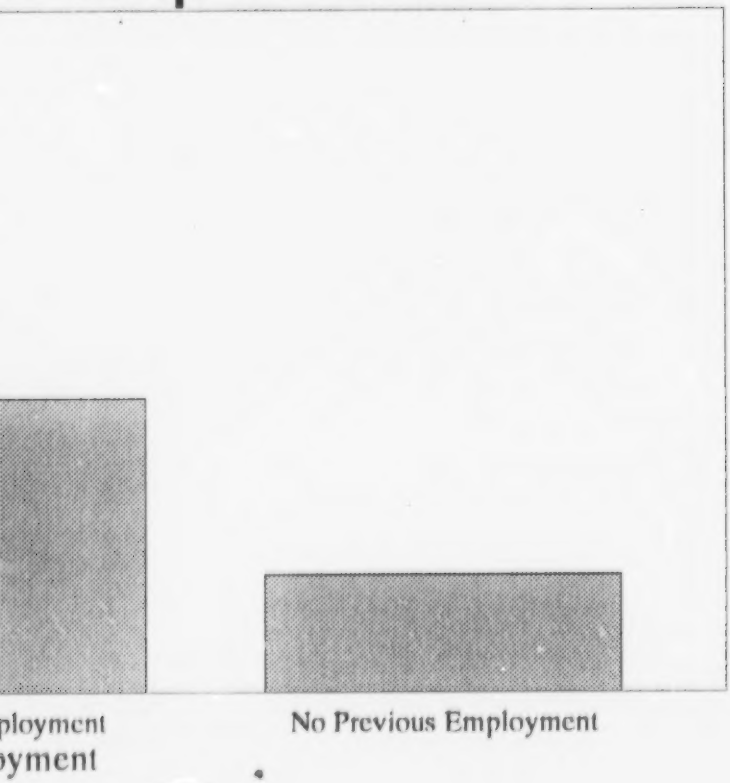

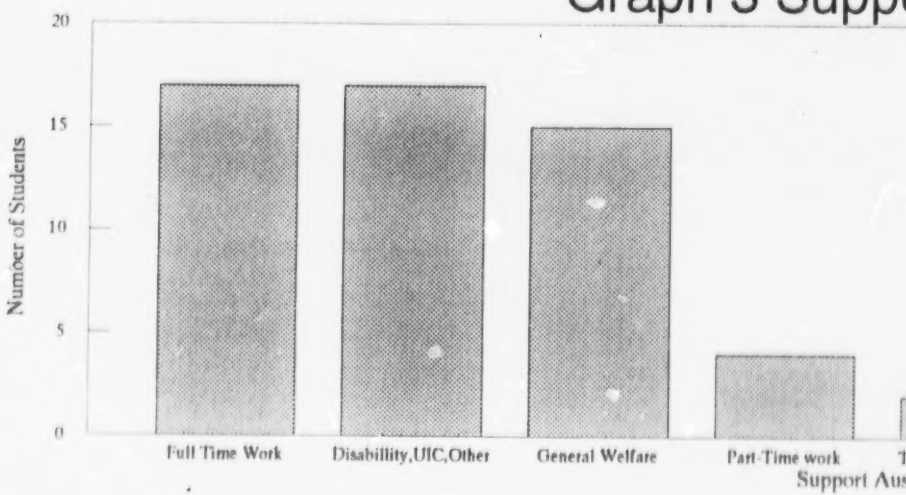
Graph 3 Suppo
20
15
10
5
0
Numoer of Students
Full Time Work
Disabillity,UIC,Other
General Welfare
Part-Time work
Support Aus

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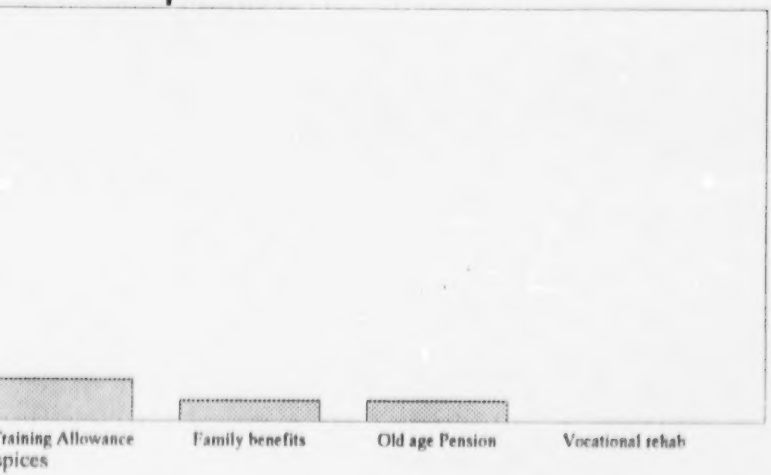
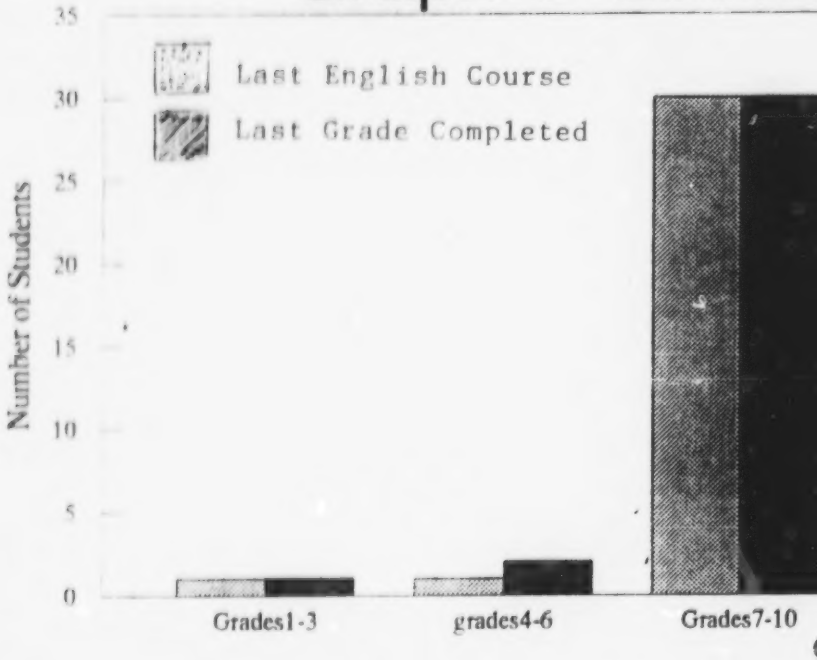


Graph 4- Educa



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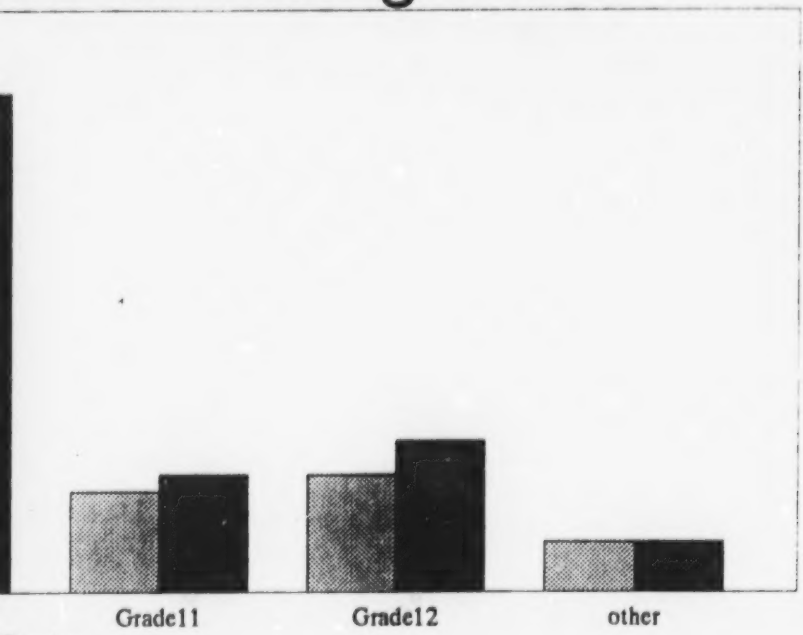
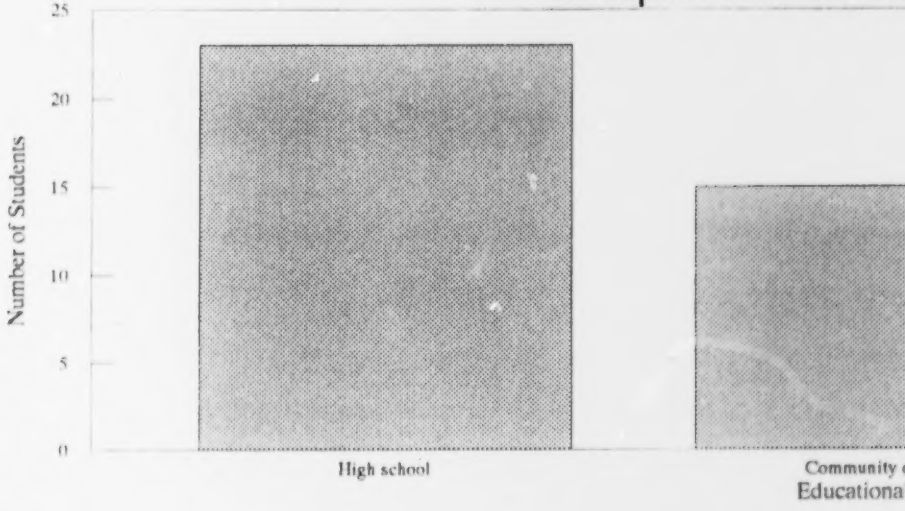


Graph 5 Educa



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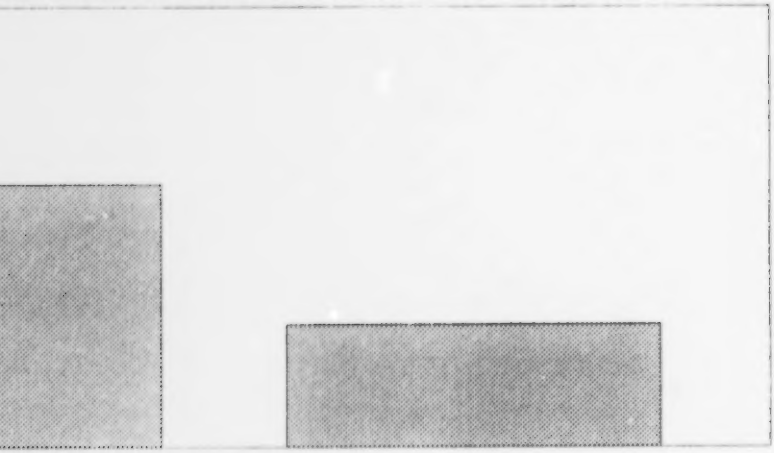

college
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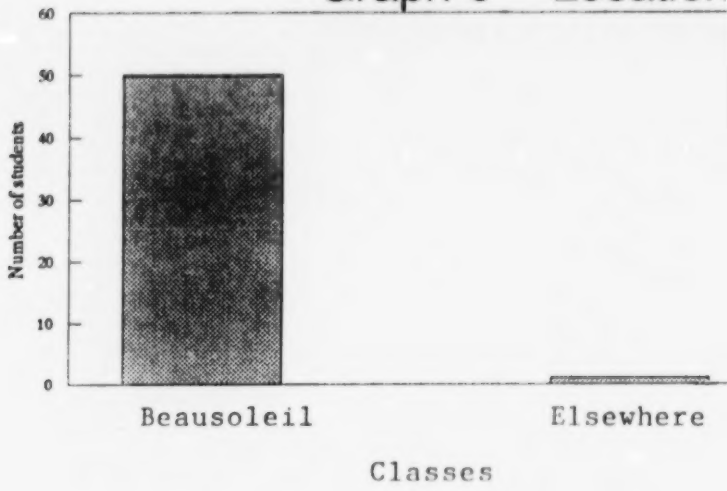
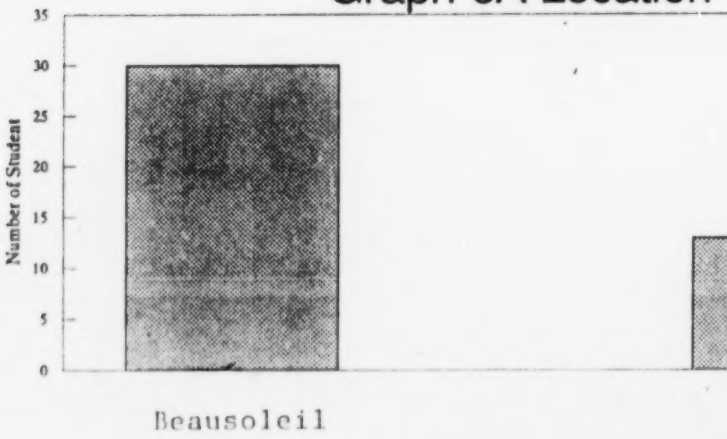
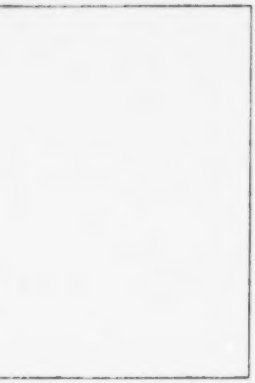
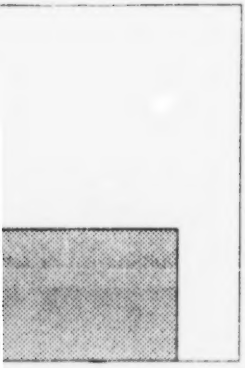
Graph 6 Location



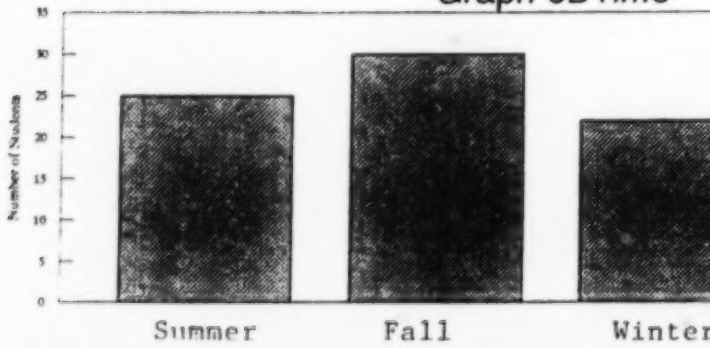
Graph 6A Location

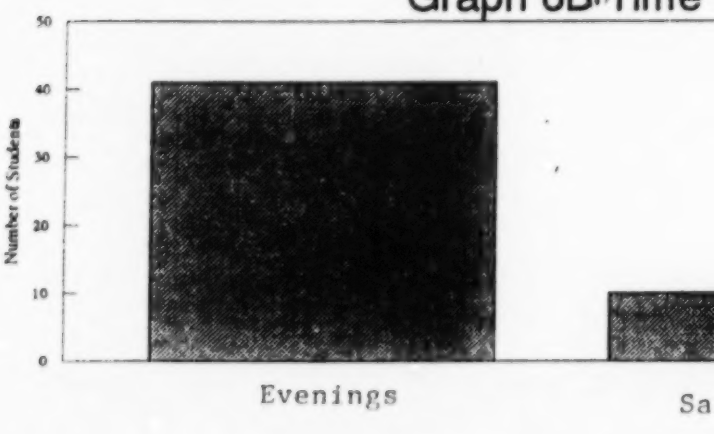


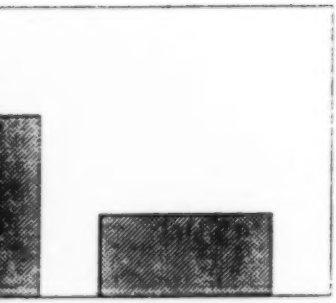




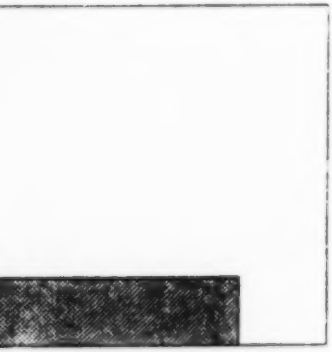
Elsewhere


Graph 6BTime
Number of Students
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
Summer
Fall
Winter
Season


Graph 6B Time
Number of Students
0
10
20
30
40
50
Evenings
Sa
Time of Day



Spring



turdays

Appendix 3 Mathematics Class Selected Student Journal Entries

Student 1

I have fun going to find help from my family. My son laughed at me for signing up for Summer School, but I have to show him I can still go to school, too. My girl thinks it's great to see Mom in school again.

I need Math for what I like to do at home for a hobby and to start a small business. I hope I don't get stuck!

Student 2

Math is not my favourite subject. When I first got here I thought I would be ahead because in High School all I really used was a calculator, so when I got to the tests I failed because the teacher wanted to see how I got it.

Now I'm learning how to do it right. It's hard because I have to get up at 7:30 a.m. to go to work until 4:00 p.m., then from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. I go to school.

I really hope to get this credit course. I still have to take my Grade 12.

This year I hope to graduate with honours so my dad can buy me a car, but that's so a can drive to COLLEGE. .

Appendix 3 (Continued)

Student 3

Math for me back in high school:

-Math for me 19-20 years ago was boring maybe because it had something to do with the teacher. He never cracked a smile or even a joke. We weren't allowed to use calculators.

Math for me today in the modern world:

-first of all it's more interesting now form me, so is the teacher (cracks a few jokes that do with math today, and she brings us a different snack every day to keep us going

-she gives me a lot of support

-told me if she can do it, I can do it too, no matter how old you are

-now I believe in the saying: "Your're never to old", or is it, "I'm not over the hill, just on a roll".

-and you do learn something new every day, in any thing you do

-I think for me it has a lot to do with what kind of teacher you have, too

-she is also willing to give more of her free time for those who think they need it

Appendix 4 Statistics for Two Summer Schools

-31 students registered for Grade 11 Mathematics and English

-7 students continued to the next Grade Level in Mathematics

-4 students went on to Secondary School

-4 students entered Community College

-4 students returned to Secondary School

-13 students were candidates for Grade 12 Word Processing

-5 students received Advanced credits

-31 students received credits in Word Processing Summer School